

January 14, 2020

City of Burlington Council  
c/o Jo-Anne Rudy, Committee Clerk  
City of Burlington  
426 Brant Street  
Burlington, ON L7R 3Z6

Re: Interim Control Bylaw (ICBL) land use study

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Dear Members of Council for the City of Burlington,

On behalf of the REALTORS<sup>®</sup> Association of Hamilton-Burlington (RAHB), we would like to provide our feedback with regards to the Interim Control Bylaw (ICBL) Land Use Study.

We are happy that Council is taking the steps to examine what is best for the City of Burlington. We know that development in the downtown, as well as related issues such as traffic, have been a challenge. We support Council's efforts to update the Official Plan and Zoning bylaw regulations, and improve public transit for the people of Burlington.

Our concerns with the ICBL lay specifically with the process that took place to implement the bylaw, and the negative effects such a bylaw will have on existing homeowners and first-time home owners looking to settle in Burlington.

**There was a lack of consultation for the temporary bylaw.**

RAHB REALTORS<sup>®</sup> work with clients in Burlington every day, and have a unique understanding of the various properties and communities that are within and surround the downtown core. Before a temporary bylaw was put into effect – one that directly affects property owners – it would have been in the best interest of the City of Burlington to consult with RAHB REALTORS<sup>®</sup> and other professional groups involved in real estate to ensure the bylaw was effective for its intended outcomes. REALTORS<sup>®</sup>, landlords and other similar professional groups have a wealth of knowledge on this subject, and consultation is a win/win for the City and your stakeholders.

**The ICBL placed disproportionate restrictions on those who own properties within the study area.**

Although the ICBL was revised a few months after implementation to correct some issues that could have been avoided if consultation with the appropriate stakeholders took place, the freeze on development continued to affect property owners within the study area. For example, although the ICBL was amended to ensure property owners could build fences, it still restricted property owners from building additions on the homes they own. We understand that new developments were an intended target with this bylaw; however, building an addition to an existing home that falls within the current bylaws and zoning should not have been hindered. Again, this type of issue – disproportionate restrictions on specific citizens of Burlington – could have been avoided if proper consultation took place.

**Affordability is an issue in Burlington, and the ICBL may raise Burlington home prices even higher.**

Through consultation with our REALTORS®, we heard that that the temporary freeze on development in downtown Burlington may result in the rising of house prices. House prices in Burlington are some of the highest in the Greater Hamilton-Burlington area. First-time home buyers looking to enter the real estate market are looking for more affordable types of properties, such as apartments. It's understandable, especially when the average price of a detached home in Burlington in December was \$1,040,731. Last month, the average price of an apartment-style property was \$549,071, an increase of 25.7 per cent since December 2018 and 120.5 from a decade ago. A restriction on building apartment-style properties within the downtown core will reduce inventory in a market that is currently in demand. This will increase prices and hinder first-time home buyers from setting roots within our community.

Moving forward, we urge the City of Burlington to consult with the appropriate professionals when making changes such as these, as there are many resources available throughout Burlington.

We look forward to working with Burlington City Council on any downtown development plans in the future – we are a resource and we want to help.

We thank you for your time and for listening to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Dave Zalepa  
2020 Government Relations Chair  
REALTORS® Association of Hamilton-Burlington

Wendy Stewart  
Manager, Communications & External Relations  
REALTORS® Association of Hamilton-Burlington